

The Argument of Erasmus vp on the Epistle of Sainct James the apostle.



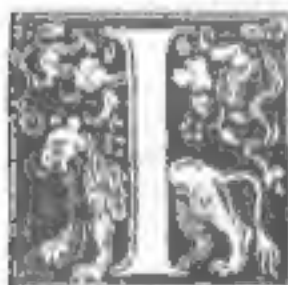
James, soasmuche as he was the bishop of Hierusalem, writeth al-
to to the residue of the Jewes, that were scattered abroade and dwelt
throughout all nations, enforning and instructing them with some
of his preceptes, howe to orde their liues.

The paraphrase of Erasmus vp on the canonickall Epistle of .S. James.

The first Chapter.

The text.

James the seruant of God and of the Lord Iesus Christe, sendeth greetinge to the
all brethren which are scattered abroade. My brethren, count ye for an exceedinge joye,
when ye fall into diuers temptacions: knowinge this, that the trying of your faithe gene-
theth patience: and let patience haue her perfect worke, that ye maye be perfect & sounde
in change nothinge. If any of you lacke mythe, let him aske of hym that giveth it: euen
God, which giveth to all men indifferently, and casteth no man in the rebband it shall
griev him. But let hym aske in feyth, and doubt not. For he that doubteth, is lyke a waue
of the sea, whiche is tosse of the wyndes, and carryed with violence. Mythe let that manne
thynke, that he shall receiue the royng of the Lord. A wauctyng mythe man, is waster
his in all his wayes. Let the brother whiche is of lowe degree crye: when he is exaltid.
Agayne, let hym that is exche receiue when he is made lowe. For euen as the flower of
the grasse, that he passeth away. For as the sunne syllyeth rich men, and the grasse withereth,
and his flower fallerth away, and the beauty of the fashion of it perisheth: euen so shall
the exche manne perishe in his wayes. Happy is the man that endureth temptacion
for when he is tryed, he shall receiue the crowne of lyfe, whiche the Lord hath promy-
sed to them that loue hym.



James that in tymes past was a worshippor of Moses
lawe, and now the worshippor and seruant of God the fa-
ther (who after the Gospell is set for the, requirerth to be
worshipped in spirite) and of his sonne Iesu Christe our
lorde, writeth this Epistle bothe to all them that are reco-
med to be of Christes profession, and namely to those whiche
the Royme of persecucion, which was raised after the dea-
th of S. Stephane, scattered abroade some one waye some an o-
ther, of all the kynredes of the people of the Jewes: which were dyspyn awaye
out of their sundre possessions, but not dyspyn downe from the felow-
ship of the Gospill: which were cast out of their owne houses, but not caste out
of the congregation of Christ: wishing vnto them true health, not this health
of the bodye only, whiche the worlde wyderth for, but that health, which Christe
giveth vnto those that his see, euen in the myddle of destructions and deathe.
Soasmuche as the commune profession of the Gospell, soasmuche as all one
baptisme maketh vs very brethren, I seing that amonge those that be brethren
in dede there ought to be a felowship bothe in matters of gladnes and of
sadne, this sorrowfull calamitie which you abyde, woulde greue my mynde ex-
ceedyngly

steadingly soze, if I had not an assured confidence of youre godlines. For I am not ignorant, that vnto the, which measure these felt cry by the pleasures of this life, banishment is moze painfully grieuous than deathe; and that it seemeth to be the wretchedest thing that may be, for a man to be plucked from his moste deare frendes: and being driven out of their olde auncient possessions, to be straungers in forayn countreys. But as for you, whiche haue reposed wholly all blessednes in only Christe, and loke for your felicitie not in thys worlde but in the worlde to come, it behoueth you to bee moste farre of from their iudgement. For God sendeth not these things vpon displeasure, but vpon his exceeding moste pittie: for thys purpose doubte, that through tempoꝛall afflictions, whiche you suffer vnderstandly, your patience myght bothe become the moze notable, and your rewarde the moze abundaunte: to thynke that as ofte as you are rolled on euery syde with sonny stormes of sorowes, you shoulde not only vnderstande, that you ought not to caste doloure vpon your hartes, as though God had forsaken you, but rather that you ought with all your hart to reioyce, that by this euident token God loveth you, and careth for you, in that he keepeth your patience: whiche if it contynue steadfast, and geue noe place to any assaults of sorowes, it shall doubtles evidently appere to bee a sure grounded foundation of a Gospellike faith. For excepte you were viterly perswaded, that the rewarde of Immortalitie is ordayned for them, that here in this worlde are afflicted for the glory of Christes sake, you would not willingly and with mery chearefull stomakes suffer so much sorowes. Than seeing that God woulde haue our saluacion to be moste chiefly ascribed vnto faith, this apperteyneth to the glory of the Gospell, that men maye thoroughly perceaue by sure argumentes, that your faithfull truste is no commune tryfling, neither waivering faith, but a strong steadfast and an inuincible faith. For the thinge that is countervailed, or vayne, or feble is moued out of place, when the storme of sorowes cometh blustering in. But that muste nedes be true and of a sure grounde, that is neither overcome nor broken awaye with banishments nor with povertie, ne with despightfull entreating, ne with prisoninges, ne with whippes, neither yet with deathe it self. It is comend a wonderful constaunce of mynde, if a man patiently suffer vnlucky fortune with an vnbroken stomacke, but when they shall plainly perceaue, that you suffer thinges of them selues bothe grieuous and bitter, with chearefull and mery reioyng hartes: to reuen shamefull entreating done vnto you for the profession of Christes sake to be the highestt glorye: to counte losse of goodes, for the richeste wynnynge: to esteeme the grieuous tormentes of body, for the pledge of euerlastyng pleasure: to iudge deathe which is a thing moste horrible of al, to be nothing elles, but the threshold & entree of y^e immortalitie to come: they shall vndoubtedly perceaue, y^e your hope, wherewith being furnished you contene those mattees: is not a couene hope, neither proceeding only of mans perswasio, but to be confirmed by y^e inspiꝛacio of the power of God. Notwithstanding, like as faith is not yet thoroughly glowed, onles it expresse it selfe by godlines of life & good turnes towardes the neighbours, eue so patience shall not haue his thoroughly perfite praise, onles y^e like as it is strong & chearefull in suffering of sorowes, euen so it be constant of it self in practising of good workes. It is a great matter, to suffer sorowes wth a good wil, but for the only glory of Christe: but it is a thoroughly perfite matter, when a man is euil done to hi self, to do good for al me: not to the only which de-

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letue it, but to the also which do he þe eul. For so it shall come to passe, þe you beig
 reebze walbe cofozmably like vnto þe head, disciples to þe scholemaster, childe
 vnto the father, in case you bee perfect & brought in euery point, & nothing want-
 ing in you, that pettepne to the pefite absolute furniture of the godlynes of
 the Gospel. This, I confesse, the lawe of Moses demaunded not, & this also le-
 meth folynnes to the wise of this worlde: but it is a new kynde of Philolophy
 that hath taught vs this newe wisdome, whiche Christe the braunty doctoz
 hath brought in to the worlde. In this philolophie if a man be not yete suffice-
 ently cofortid, it is not for him to runne vnto þe Philolophers of this worlde, for
 their doctrine is ouer muche tempred with myngle mangle, than can suffice to
 accomplishe so greate a weightie matter. It is aboute the powerts of mortall
 menne, that is prescribed. It hath the nede of the celestiaall helpe, and therfore ther
 is an heauenly rewarde ordayned. They that measure all theyr matters after
 the pleasures and displeasures of this worlde, if they bee at any tyme oppreste
 with sorowes, they aske counsaill of men, they aske helpe of men: But you muste
 aske of God the helpe of heauenly wisdome. For he graunteth vnto all, not only to
 the Jewes, but also to the gentiles, and he graunteth accordyng to hys owne lybe-
 rall bounteousnes plentifully, and calleth none in the teeth with hys good
 eunte. He requirerh no grametpce of vs, neyther neberh he any mannes helpyng
 hande. It is the Pharisees worde to saie: sozbe doe that I aske, for I taste
 ewyse in the wcke. But the right godly man prayeth thus: I am vntowrthy of
 thy bounteous goodnes, I am worthy of wyathe, but yete for all that loke vpon
 thy seruaunt, for thou by nature arte good and mercifull. Therfore if a man
 be mynded to obteyne of hym that he asketh, let him aske without distrustyng,
 without doubte or wauctyng. Let him not considze the weighte of the afflictions,
 let him not marke hys owne powert, let him only considze þe God is the moste best
 and moste mightie, of whome he dependeth. He that putteth hys whole truste
 in the helpe of God, is sure and steadfast. But whosoener doubteth wauctyng-
 ly and loketh on eche syde, dependyng so of God, that he loketh with all so-
 riennes succours, neyther beleueth with hys whole harte in the promisses of God,
 but as it were partly hauing a distruste, reasoneth with hym selfe with humane
 argumentes to and fro, concernyng dyuine matters, he is not stable: but as the
 waues of the sea are tossed and turned nowe hithe nowe shyder, as the wynde
 and tyde carreyeth them, even so he is carreyed aboute with humane reasons and
 dyuine soztes of opinions, and is become out of equalitie and vnylike to hym
 selfe. Therfore he that is such a one is deceaued, if he thinke that he shall obteyne
 any thing of god when he thinketh euil of hym, of whome he asketh helpe, distrustyng
 hym, as though he eether would helpe good vnto me, & could do lytel, or dles
 were lreel true in his promisses. The sure christian faith is single, & waucterh
 no waye, but always beholdeth only hym, which forsaketh none that trusteth in
 hym, whether it chaunce to lyue or to dye. But the manne, whose mynde is di-
 uided two wayes, graynge respects to God on thys parte, and to the worlde
 on that parte, he is out of euen grounde and inconstaunt not only in hys pray-
 ers, but in all thynges also that he goeth about, hauyng one thyng in hys
 mouthe, an other thing in his harte: and as tyme seruerh, affected nowe after thys
 sozte nowe after that sozte. It behouerh a man not to turne hys mynde as for-
 tune bloweth to and fro, as the commune sozte of men doeth. But rather let
 the christian of lowe degree, & he that is pressed with sondry lumpes of sorowes,
 stretch vpon his harte, & reioice to this behalfe, þe being despised of þe worlde he is not
 despised

despised with God, who being nothing offended at the baseness of state or fortune, hath made him worthy of the fellowship of sayntes, neither excludeth he him out of the entraunce of the kingdome of heauen. On the other parte let the riche man reioyce to him selfe in thys behalfe, that where as he was muche set by amonge woollinges for the false goodes of thys worlde, nowe for the protesting of Christ he is despised and contemned; and where as pride made him hyge stomake before by reason of hys vayne goodes, nowe being casted downe with men and troden vnder fete, he is rich in true goodes with God. By thys meanes it shall come to passe, that neither the poore mannes lowe degree shall cast him downe, nor the riche mannes prosperitie make him insolent, especially if they on either of theyr partes consider, that bothe the cuttes, wherewith the poore are pricke, and the goodes, wherewith the riche set their pleasure, are not of longe continuance, but hastily vanishe away, none otherwyse than the flowres of herbes, whiche like as by the calme south wynde they thruste forth their stues sodainly at the beyn of the spring tyme, euen so by a by at the blustyringe of the northe wynde and heate of the sunne, they wyther away and dye, in touchinge that the flower, that spring at the sunne rysinge and delited mannes eyes with his most pleasaunte colour, is scene dye at the sunne setting. The rees, inasmuch as they are fast settyd vpon deperotes, & furnished with sure grounded strength, are longe grene, and some are also euermore grene, and leaue not theyr saye greenesse, neither for vncertaine wyndes nor rugged wynter: But the herbe, because it is not furnished with the same thinges, and as the hote sunne is broken out, is destitute of his succour, wherewith it nourished that saynes of the floure for the tyme. And so whyle it taperteth in the stalkes it doeth neither nourishe ne susteyne his floure, but withereth ageth, dyeth, falleth away, where as a while before it delited mannes eyes with so greate a fauour. Because therfore no chrystyan shoulde glorye in those thinges that are neither of sure grounds nor longe endurynge, let him rather respecte the thinges that are eternal, and that are delectable in the sight of God: let him rather studie to bee a brauncie alwayes grene, than a herbe that with a lyght hutte will by and by dye. Wouldest thou see nowe the flower that is spongye, how saye, how goodly, how pleasaunte of colour, and how swete it is: what a goodlynes of grene leaues, what a glistering, what a succour, what yowth hath it: And sone at a blaste of the southe wynde, and with the heate of the sunne, what fading, what ageing, what dying hath it: The floure is sene to spring, to come forwarde, to be at the best, to age and to dye all in one daye. And like vnto it is eche mans felicitie. He that nowe risseth in puerple, shyneth in gold, glisseth in precious stones, hath a great trayne waiting on hym, is caried in a charer, and is honoured as if wery a certayne God among men: if fortune blome backwarde, he shall eche be wyppd besydes al his goodes & be banished to goe on begging, or be cryeing in prison, or be trauellid wth a tribuene toppet and fede rauens, or if none of these chynge happen vnto hym, yet death shall come vnthought vpon, and sodainly dispatche al his galaunt drabe. It is the parte of the heathens to measure felicitie by these maner of goodes, which ouer that they depend vpon fortune chauce, ouer that they are nothing elles doeth, forsake vs when we departe hence: if they bee not set naught by, bring destruction. It is the office of Christians to folowe those thinges, wherby eternal goodes are gotten, vpon which neither fortune, neither age, neither deathe hath any interest.

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For no manne is blessed because he is riche, but he shall be surely blessed if for the profession of the Gospelles sake, he haue ben spoiled of those thynges that he had in possession, if he haue desyred the pleasures of thys lyfe, whiche he had abundance of, and suffer tormentes and imprisonmentes for Chrystes sake, if he endure for hys sake in all sorowes euen vnto death with an vniuersallyng hate, interpreting on thys wyse, that the more he is persecuted with the sorowes of thys woylde, so muche the more he is loued of God, whiche tyeeth the patience of his obedient seruante to hys owne glozre, that he maye bothe be an example vnto other to be like thys woylde, and after he hath vnkauently behaued hymselfe in the conflicts, and hathe lerned a lesson of true vertue and of fayth, he maye weare the Palme and crowne, not of oken bowes and of laurell, for they doe wither also: after suche sorte as they receyue, which hure after rewardes and prayse of menne) but the crowne of immortall lyfe whiche is promised not of a man that canne deceaue, but of God him selfe. But he hath promised it, not to them that haue mucked by the greatesse substance of riches, not to them that haue excelled other in bodily strength, not to them that haue shedde moste bloods, but to them that for hys sake haue desied the goodes of thys woylde, and haue vnkauently suffered the displeasures of this woylde.

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Let no man saye when he is tempted, that he is tempted of God. For as God cannot be tempted to euill, so wylde he not tempt any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawne away, & enticed of hys owne concupiscence. Euen when lust hath conceived, the synneth forth synne: & synne when it is synned, bringeth forth death. We see yet, my deare brethren, wher good synne, and euill pasture synne, to from above, and cometh downe from the saydes of Ingels, with whom is no variablenesse, neyther to be changed into backe, & thys synne will beget be vs with the wyrd of trouth, that we shoulde be the ryght trouth of yns creatures. Wherfore, deare brethren, let every man be swyfte to heare, slowe to speake, slowe to wrath. For the wyrd of man worketh not that which is synneth, but synne begetteth death. Wherfore, laye asyde all thynges a supraduylde of malicioussnes, and receaue word with care, the word that is graued in you, which is able to save your soules.

Whether a man loue God purely, the pleasures of this woylde beo tye, but muche more doeth the hurly hurly of afflictions. And it is in vs, that being furnished with the helping ayde of God, we maye neyther become vnder mycalinges through vayne pleasures, ne moued with terrible turmoylings. But if a manne be moued with the felices of the woylde from the right face of mynde, or if a man be led by þe sorowes of afflictions out of true godlines, he hath nothing to laye vnto Goddes charge. He þe getteth the victorie, getteth the victorie by the helpe of God: and he that is dectromine, is overcome through hys owne faulre. For God doeth not geue meinte occasion to synne, but the thenge that he geueth according to his owne goodnes for the nourishment and increase of godlines, our myndes beinge corrupte, and as it were exalted with afflictions, turneth to thoccasion of theyr owne destruction. For God doeth somtymes geue vs the vse of habundance of goodes, and the comodities of life, to the intent that beinge prouoked by his liberrall goodnes we shoulde rendre thankes vnto him. Againe, he suffereth vs somtymes to be afflicted with aduersities, that he maye both make our godlines more notably serue, & increase our rewardes. And if the matter turne to the contrary parte, it is our faulte & not his. For like as he beinge by nature good, can not be prouoked to any euill, euen so doth he entice no man vnto euill. The thing is of vs, that turneth the goodnes of God vnto oure euill. He geueth pleintie of meates, he geueth the liquor of wyne, that beinge moderately refreshed, we shoulde geue prayse to the maker. And Shall he that is dronken with wyne call God vnto the lawe & no in no wyse let

let him accuse his owne mynde, whose vicious goodnes entised and byrde him
to viciouſities. Ther is a corrupte readynes vnto vice graffed in oure hattes
of our fyllie parentes vice, and that is as it were a ſede of Synne. And if it bee
receiued in to the harte and receaue nourishment, than the mynde harbe as it
were all ready conceiued ſynne. And vnles the vicious desire be byrden out of
mynde, the stynking ſmell of it groweth and wasteth strong by littell and littell,
till deadly ſynne be committed. Aliche, when it is in his nombrs conſumately
bons, beynmeth to bring fo; the frute it ſelf agayne. And the frute that it bring-
eth fo; the is the naughtieſt ſcote of all, euen death euerlaſting: And this is
the moſt heauy frute of that pleaſure that is delectable in outwarde appea-
raunce, and prompyng ſweete grace, I wote not what, while it hypocryt vnder the
bapre of pleaſure, the depp angling hole of death. Like therfoze as thys ſowre
woulde hath nothing pure and perſitte in eury parte, but the good thinges are
corrupt with the haoure, and the thinges that are of gladnes are entrecchaun-
geably myngled with ſadneſſe, corruption infecteth the myce, diſeaſe and age
becapeth the ſtrength of bodye, darkenes hynndeth the fauour of lighteuen
ſo in our mynnes, as longe as they are entangled with theſe bodyes, there is
ſcantly any thenge in all partes bleſſed and pure, but it is corrupt with ſome
ſpote of humane deſires o; with the darkenes of erreour and ignoraunce. But
what ſo euer naughtynes is in vs, we ought to impuie it vnto oure ſelues and
not to God. For if we were of pure affections, if we put oure truſte with oure
whole harte in God, if we byrathed with all oure inward poſets vnto the
thinges that are euerlaſting and heauenly, what ſo euer ſhoulde wee layd a-
gawnte vs in this life, whether it were meye o; ſoye, it woulde turne to the in-
crease of Godlynes. Therfoze deſire byrthym, doe not you all the ſeminate ſoye
of ſolliſh men doeth, who to thintent they may excuſe they ſynnes, pleade with
the maker of nature at law, as though he were the autor of Synne. Farte be this
erreour from you, whiche haue learned the Gofpells philoſophie. Like as God
of his owne nature is purely and moſte thicly good, euen ſo doeth there no-
thing procede from him but that whiche is good. If any naughtynes ther-
foze be in vs, let vs not aſcribe it vnto God but vnto oure owne ſelues: and
if any good thng, if any true light, if any vnderſtand wyſedome be in vs, let
vs aſcribe it wholly vnto God the autor. If this groſſe woulde haue any light,
it harbe it of the heauely bodies, and eſpecially of the ſonne. What true
knowlage ſo euer is in vs, what pure and ſyncrete affection ſo euer be in vs,
it arriſeth not of vs (for we are nothing elles but ſynners and ignorant pec-
counes,) but it procedeth from aboue: what ſo euer is truly good, it cometh
from the autor of all goodneſſe: what ſo euer is truly ſainfull and perſitte thing
there be, and ſuch thing as maketh you acceptable vnto God, it cometh from the foun-
tayne of all perfeccion: what ſo euer is truly light, the father and pource of all
true light ſendeth it vnto vs fro him ſelf. Theſe thinges be beſtoerth not by
oure deſertes, but he graueth them vnto vs freely, as he is liberall of nature.
They are giſtes rather than rewardes, it is a liberal larges rather than a hire.
It is not right therfoze that we chalange any thing thereof vnto vs, but for oure
naughtynes let vs call vpon the mercie of God: for goodnes becauſe it is not
ours, let vs geue thanks vnto his liberalitie. Like as he of his owne nature
is the beſte, euen ſo he can not geue but the thinges that are beſteſt: as he is

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unchaungeable, and alwayes like hymselfe, so there is nothing with him, that is obscured with any coule of darkenes. This our dape is taken awaye of the night following, and cast about with cloudes goyng betwene, humane wisedome is darkened with errors of opinions, mans bprightnes is infected with naughty desires. With hewthere is no mixture of supiles, no coule of darkenes. It behoueth vs therfore also to confoyme our felicitie to the uttermost of our powere according to his simplicitie, that geuing our selues vnto godly iudges, and being apte more and more to receiue his graces, we maye be as it were transformed in to hym. For it is common, that childre resemble the nature of their parent. We haue vnbaptisly resembled Adam the pynce of this grosse and corrupt brethe, he being obscured with the darkenes of synne hath begotten vs that are entangled with darkenes. In that we lothe heauenly thinges, in that we are greedy of earthy thinges, we resemble the disposition of hym. In that we are blinde, in that we doe as al auentures as if blinde man cast his staffe, and in that we fall, it is of our earthy parent. But the father of heauen hath more happily begotten vs agayne, that being as it were created newe agayne we myght confoyme our selues like vnto our newe burthe in Innocencie of life, and knowlage of euerlasting truth. That earthy father being seduced with the false deceitfull promises of the serpent, begate vs vnto darkenes. And this heauenly father begate vs agayne not of the corrupt seede of our earthy father, but of the most pure seede of the eternall and truly speaking worde. The serpentes worde was a lying worde, and cast downe manne from the state of Innocencie. But the worde of the Gospels doctrine is true, whereby we are woken into the inheritance of Immortalitie, and called in to the fellowshippe of Iesu Christe the sonne of God. He was the true light proceeding of the moste high light, whose doctrine hath made bright mine myndes, and set them free from the doctrine of this world. And the heauenly world is of such efficacy, that it doeth not onely chaunge vs, but transformeth vs as it were brearly in to other men, abhorring now the thynges that we loued muche before, and loue that we before abhorred. And this is the honoure that the heauenly father woorthed vs withal not prouoked by our merites, but of his own free goodnes, whereby he so determined from euerlasting, that he woulde, by such meanes as hath not ben heard tell of, make a newe creature in the earth, and woulde that we shoulde be as it were the fyre leues of this newe estate, in that we are called amonge the fyre vnto the doctrine of the Gospel. Forasmuche then as God hath indueed vs with this honour freely, it remaineth, that we confoyme oure selues lyke vnto his bounteous goodnes to the vttermost of our powere agayne: we are freely admitted vnto this felicity, but we might fall from it agayne for all that through our owne fault, onles we studie to kepe through godly so-called, that which is truly geue. It were of no effecte for vs to be chosen through baptisme, and professing of the Gospels doctrine into the fellowshippe of the sonne of God, excepte we frame oure selues through chast and cleane maners like vnto our profession. That like as euerlasting light hath geuen vs light by the sonne of God, so muste all oure life beate wimes, that we belonge to the fellowshippe of light. We once cast of the olde manne with his errors, with his affectes, with his vices, now it is reason that we ensue the cleane contrary thynges. Heretofore you had rather seme maistres than disciples, for so ambitious persuaded you, that the common people

people woulde reuen him the better leaues, that was moſte full of babling: you had rather haue ben angrie with hym that counſailed you aright, than to acknowledge your faulte: you had rather haue folowed wicked outragious liue, than ſolue thoſe thinges that bring ſaluation: Now my deare brethren, who ſo will be counted a new man, let him be slow to ſpeake, ſlow to heare, and ready to learne of any manne. Whobetter he no manne rashly no; ouer haſtily take vpon him to be a teacher. And like as he is not worde of perill to fall, that is haſtye to ſpeake, euen ſo is that manne inclined to doe iniurie, whiche is lightly moued in hys mynde. For it is requiſite that godly menne bee freee of not only from all reuengement, but alſo from all euill ſpeaking. For he ſhalbe the moze ſafe from chiding, that maketh no anſwere: and he ſhal do no man wrong, that when he is prouoked, is not angrie. Among men peraduenture he ſhall ſeeme a euill man, that requireth one euill worde with an other, one euill dobe for an other, but yet he ſhalbe a greate deale wyſe from the iuſtice of God, who by hys ſonne haſte taught vs to ſpeake well of them that backbite vs, to wiſhe well to them that wiſhe euill to vs, to doe good for them that doe euill vnto vs. Theſe thinges he doeth not ſtill leaſeth his tongue cunne at large, whiche is a ſwearing membre and a ſperrer, no; he that haſte wyſe ſecretly. Theſe maner of lutes, like as they ſwertthoue and throke the ſede of Goddes worde, that when it cometh vpon it bringe forth no fruite in you, euen ſo doe they leaſe that it cannot bee ſowen in to the ſilde of the mynde. It taketh no rote in a drye place, ne in marie, neither in the ſande that ſtetheth alwaye, but it requirith a pure, a tryme and a ſubſtaunciall grounde. Therfore if ye will, that the ſede of the worde of the Goſpell, that is once caſt, bringe fruite in you, fruite (I ſay) not for a ſeaſon, as a comonite fruite wherewith the bodies may be refreſhed, but the eternall ſaluation of your ſoules: make cleane the ſilde of your harte, not only from the cumulle of euill ſpeaking and of ioynte, but alſo from all grev lutes, wherewith mans mynde is defiled: from the thornes of couctouſnes from the grauill of eaſynes, from the ſpurre of outragious liue from the ſtones of pride and wilfulnes. For in deede the mynde that is burthened with thys gear, is not able to receiue the worde of the Goſpell, which knocketh in vayne at the tympane of the eares, vnles it liſte depe in to the inward partes of the harte. And if it once ſettle in to your myndes, it ſhall not bee barren, but ſhewe forth and ſhewe it ſelfe with godly workes.

¶ And ſo that ye be boare of the wordes and not heare only, becauſing your ſelues ſelues. For if any man heare the wordes, and declareth not the ſame by hys workes, he is like vnto a man that heareth by a bobly eare in a place. For ſoone as he hath toke on him ſelfe, he geeth his worde, and forgetteth immediately wher hys ſayyng was. Wher who ſo toke in the paralyſe lawe of iſtaelle, and continueth therein: yet he be was a feigertull preacher, but a boar of the wordes: the ſame ſhalbe happy in hys boar. If any man amonge you ſeeme to be deuout and reſeruet not hys ſengar, but deſeruet by ſome beere, ſome maner deuotion is in vayne. Wher deuotion and vndeſeruet before God the ſerbet, is that to viſite the ſerbetes and viſitours in they; aduertyſe, and to hepe hym ſelfe vnpoſſible of the wordes.

The text.

The Jewes haue their lawe by harte without boke and yet they expreſſe it not in their liue. The philoſophers doe learne perfectly the leſſons howe to liue well, a thinke that to bee ynough, ſeece deceauyng them ſelues: where as the felicitie of manne is not in the ſpeaking but in the liuyng. But vnto you it ought not to be ynough, that being newly inſtrueted, you haue heard the Goſpelles doc-

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trine: that being baptised you are admitted vnto the harbor hidden mysteries of the Gospelles doctrine: that you haue learned ouer and ouer all the whole philosophie of Christe and all his life: so that you haue receaued the promise of Immortall life. That which Christe taught, must be expressed in outward manners: That which he did, must be followed of vs to the uttermost of our possible powers. It becometh vs to bee vnto the desires of this worlde, and be buried with him, to rise againe with him vnto Innocence, to bee caried with him in to heauen: and finally we ought so to lyue vpon earth, as we appeare not vnto: his the rewards of heauen.

Wilt you heare, howe that he perceiue no fruite at all, which heareth the worde of the Gospell, but lightly and vncōsiderately? He is moste like vnto a man that beholdeth his face in a glasse. He beholdeth, but he doeth nothing els but beholde only. For he can not change his naturall face, neither goeth he any other maner away from the glasse than he came to it. Per inasmuch as he wold only for this purpose, to see what fauour his face was of, he thinketh not of the amending of the faulces of his fauour, but as soone as he goeth away from the glasse, he remembreth nothing which a one he sawe him selfe to be. But the glasse of the Gospelles doctrine sheweth not the blemishes and outbraynges of the body, but it layeth all the diseases of thy soule before thine eyes: methought it only sheweth them, but also healeth them. Moses lawe did rather bite the sores of the soule than heald them. For the lawe, as concerning the letter, was imperfecte, and stayed menne from euill by feare, rather than caused menne willingly to folowe the thynges that were good. But the lawe of the Gospell, obtyneth more of the willing, and those that bee at libertie through loue, than the lawe of Moses gat profite. And the lawe of the Gospell maketh perfitte that it begetheth, where the other byngeth nothing to perfection. Whosoever therfore will diligently behold bothe his mynde and his life at this glasse (and that should he doe continually) neuer mouing his eyes from the example and doctrine of Christe, that is to say, whosoever heareth the holy word, nor after suche light soote, that turning him selfe backe by and by to the cares of this worlde be faine to forget that he hearde, but frameth all his life after the rule of it, expressing by godly workes, that which he stucke fast in the mynde of his soule, he shall surely be blessed: not because he heard the worde, but because he did after it in his affections and maners. Thou hearest Christ saye, that the torment of hell fyre abydeth for him, that sayeth vnto his brother: thou fool. And yet forgetting by and by what thou hearest, thou arte ready for a lyght chiding worde to fight with him. Thou hearest, that those riches are to be set saught by, which are in daunger of mothes and tereus, and that true riches ought to be layed vp in store in heauen: but as soone as thy backe is turned fro the preacher, thou tūnest on wthy all thy sojcasting studies, to mucke vp riches, (thou carest not how) by hoke or by croke, as though thou beleuedest, that godlynes should not be rewarded after this life. And if any among you thinke him selfe wonderous deuout, if he kepe his handes from slealyng, and from fighting and other byces, and yet for all that refrayne not his tongue from backbiting, misreportes, from scoldinges, from filthy talkynges, neither his harte from vncleane thinkynges: his deuotion is vnpofitable & vnfrautfull. Wherefore he is not punished by many lawes, that only talketh of whoredome though he doe it not, yet he is become an whoremonger before God, that in his

minde hath committed whoredome. He saitheth no punishment of men, that couereth an other mans good, if he may escape unpunished: but he is guiltie of theise before God, & hath concealed theise in hys minde. We are euened after & manifest dedes before manne, for they see not the minde. But God loketh vpon the inward affections of the minde, and eueneth vs after them. A corrupt minde is bled for the mooste parte to burst out in to the tongue. Among Christian people a reuiling word is a kinde of manslaughter, but this is playne, that true godlynes can in no wise agree with rashness of tongue. Neither yet is it sufficiente vnto Christian religion, to haue adseynd from sinning: it behooueth also to abounde in good woordes, for in dede bonde seruantes absteyne from doing euill, not for feare of punishment, but those that are right children, it becometh to haue loue, whiche is no idle loytering matter, but effectually working, and putteth forthe it selfe freely without compulsion to dooe euery good worke. But some woulde saye, what dedes than are those that make vs right religious in dede? Those that smell of the Jewes secte set furthe the praye of religion, in halles and wyde robes, in choise of meates, in washinges, in longe prayers, and other ceremonies, which are some tymes not altogether to be contemned, if by them as by signes we be warned of those thinges, whiche are the propre own matters of godlines: but that are pernicious ware, if a man thinke that he is made religious by meane of the where as of them selues without exposition, they make a man rather an hypocrite. Howbeit the obseruing of the seemeth a religious deuoute matter among men, that wickedly repose godlines in trifole thinges: whiche perchauce are signes of godlines, but not the cause of godlines, seeing that of them selues they are nether good nor euill, onles they seeme to be suche, either through custome or in the opinion of manne, where as true godlynes is in the inward myndes, and expelleth it selfe by faste more certaine sure signes than by ceremonies. Will you therefore heare, what is true religion with God the father, whiche eueneth you not after the iudgement of manne? Doubtes, this is the pure and undefiled religion: that like as we haue by experiance proued bothe the mercie and libeall goodness of God towards vs, such so muste we agayne bee bothe mercifull and stonely libeall towards our neighbour, and that not vpon any hope of mutuall good euens to be requirid to vs agayne, but of a mere and a pure vpright loue, looking for the rewarde of our wel doing at the handes of none other but of God, whiche is contente to haue it reched to bee done to him selfe, what so euer we bestowe for his sake vpon our breder.

He is a godly and a pure man among the Jewes, that toucheth not carpen, that is washro with quicke rennyng water: but with God he is godly and pure, that succoureth the fatherles children and wydowes in theyr trouble, that releueth hys oppresse brother, and helpeth the needy with money. Among the Jewes he is vncleane, that eateth swynes flesh: But with God he is vncleane, whose minde is infected and defiled with the grebe lustres of hys woordes. But a manne will saye, what be those lustres? In the iudgement of the world, he is counted vile that is poore: And he the more honeste set by, that hath the mooste possession of riches, and for that cause theyr speciall care and care is to get to themselves the mooste substance of money. He is reched a tolke and a benighted rascal, that maketh no querell when wrong is done vnto him. He is counted a fool, that doeth a good turne for a badde. He is euened a Holy
ruler

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of importance refer to the profit as to the bestowing of money. It penetrates into the minds of the bishops. It mightily of bringing forth the most honest opinions. It breathes up by strength persuasions if merrily have been. It is distributed into private and is stamped the heart to think more of, that man who is the public, it is such, but more because that they may obey by and with a more willing heart is shown; he is not on paper at our other pleasure. It is being that the bishops would be to the state. The same is the same thought unto the nation. You see what beards the state sustains the Jugglers be of them which as when the nation is troubled abroad are carried on the waters with a world before a world of words not at all intended about with a best used frame to be used to such a degree as that a king should be able to govern the people and let the country with the means by a lawyer and that is given a long time to the state to govern to of the state part of it. It is the same as the emperor's government of the land is not in order to him. It is a man who is not but it is a man who is the noble and full of bloods and the most right's bestowment words and bloods, and death by the state's curmours. Only it be the same by the heart of the minds of letters and people and all being bound together by the same and such an effect.

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If the state be great it may be able to give them such the tongue of the state to the best of it. It is being a man who is not but it is a man who is the noble and full of bloods and the most right's bestowment words and bloods, and death by the state's curmours. Only it be the same by the heart of the minds of letters and people and all being bound together by the same and such an effect.

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were the border of all the whole flame even so what rust so rust is in this life, it pierceth out of an rust tongue as out of a wood. And the as a first case I remember with a great cockle of scurfe what be steel and iron of scurfe and what scurfe on it. Every of the tongue it is leuzed with the other members of the head that if it be not restrained it infecteth and defileth with his poison all the table boord & mischief as the life of man with all manner flames of vices. It is his estate due fit to his all age. Yet the violence of this mischief was not good unto the tongue by nature. Whi he hath given motion by the impulse some p. He of the teeth and lippes that the p. of the tongue ought circumspectioe to be looked re and moderated. but it is set on fire of the fire of the sinde is firste infected by wicked spites & the portion of the sinde through the instrument of the tongue breaketh out more and more and make him full of naughty to be flacke nature and the portion doeth alio: so: spre other with his contagiousnes. Is as that mischief is multiplied, can not possiblie be restrained for no force nor by reason. Whi that thing is there in the world to be desirable, that man be good, can not make same by some matter of man. ¶ First is no more bracke in tongue no tongue is continuous no respente is nor any note. King can it of holes to breathe but if there be made gentle by nerves whiis and chrysting. Lyons are made tame ¶ Lions and chrysting are made gentle, ¶ Expanses also are made to be tamed ¶ herbes are made tame. serpents are made tame. Calves and gripes are made tame. Beestes also are stilled to be taming. And yet these nature are made no: tamed. Some of these are tame. ¶ I mane that could be tame an better operate tongue. whereas these herbe be both in tamed part tamed and tamed. ruste bar. A. Some of things that be tamed. It is as many as are tamed each as many as are in the world as many as be of the world and this most famous member the tongue is made outrageous. Herbe and violence rather is it better only but also defiled with deadly poison. Lyons be they but with their claws and teeth but yet they have no bones. A poets are stoned with venom but yet they have no herbe. The only tongue is not one. Two manner of words. Both in bracke & in tamed. Whi is and bracke. Whi is in that it strength of one of whom is both. Whi is the fronsome buzz noise but this whom they like with the noise of the world. and the others buzz noise but with rejoicing in they, small p. p. d. n. o. h. e.

And yet this portion were less desirable if it were gentle and norfome but one our were. But now the mischief is after language. and flourish it self in to all manner of words. that it make the noise and the more certain our harme and death offendeth the more better. Whi is it make in our world. Whi is of goodness. ¶ Whi is nothing better nothing of any regard with all men that goodness. ¶ Whi is the border of it doeth harme the more peccat. Whi is it make in the world. Whi is it can not agree in one together. for be cannot be good in the world. Whi is it such and a rusted. peccat ad amite his neighbour. And yet notwithstanding with the same instrument we praise God as if it be father. ¶ Whi is the same we be. Whi is it make one neighbour. Whi is it make after the likeness of God. Whi is the tongue we praise God the maker of all goodness. Whi is it the same we be. Whi is it make in the world. Whi is it make in the world. Whi is it make in the world.

God is neither made more honourable with our praises nor hurt with our sinnes.

The paraphrase of Erasmus upon the Epistle

It is to be noted that the most famous of the reformers, Erasmus of Rotterdam, was a Dutch humanist, and his work was directed towards the improvement of the Latin language and the correction of the Vulgate. His paraphrase of the Epistle to the Romans is a masterpiece of Latin prose, and it is one of the most important works of the Northern Renaissance. Erasmus's work was a direct result of his deep knowledge of Greek and Latin, and his desire to bring the Bible to the people in a more accurate and understandable form. His paraphrase is a model of clarity and elegance, and it has been widely read and studied for centuries. It is a testament to the power of the humanist movement, and to the enduring value of Erasmus's work.

now shall the rest of the money, that you haue scraped out of the hard earth, gnaw out the guttes of your soules, even as it were fire. It shall bee to late and in vayne for you to fruite your selues with repentance of your naughty kept money. It shall double your sorowe, that you haue naughty kept that you haue naughty gotten. In feare of the mercy of God, whiche you might with losse of substance haue bought, you haue heaped up for your selues the wrath and vengeance of God.

You were not onely not liberall towards your ney brother, but you haue also defrauded the simple body of his due wages. Beholde the reaper that dwelleth withi trayning downe your coine, being defrauded of his wages, cryeth vnto God, and asketh vengeance, yea and he cryeth so, that they: voyce heareth through into the eares of the lord Sabaoth, whiche ought also to be hearede of you. They were not able to reuenge them of them that are bigger than they, they were not heards of any manne that was a iudge, whiche for the most parte fauoureth them that are moste wealthy. And they them selues helde their peace, but the wickednes it selues cryeth out vnto the iudge God, whiche is neither afrayed of the wealthy, nor also reuengeth the wronge of the poore oppressed to belong vnto him. But you for all that are not moued with the sorrowfull griefe of the hungry and thurstie poore. Other mennes (were hatched by you. Other mennes hunger and thurst made you late. They teeth backed in their heade, they were flatus for colde, they were killed with hunger and thurst. And you in the meane while passed your life sweetly and in pleasures vpon earth, you lived waiuonly, as febe your soules with all kinde of voluptuous pleasures, keeping daily feastes, as gogroule, as other are wont to doe in a solme, holy day, whaumeate offering to sayde. Further thought you it enough to haue defrauded the poore manne, but you haue condemned and killed the Innocent that made no resistance. You thought you should haue done that without punishment alwaye, whiche you might doe without punishment of men. It is a kinde of manslaughter to defraude the simple of their iuryng. And yet for all that, thus cruellye did not suffice your vncouenable outrageousnes. You thyrsed after their blood, and when the faultles people were shamefully handled, it was wrath and hurke to your Romakes. But the matters beinge turned euer besyde, they haue the fruition of those pleasures that neuer shall decaye: and you bewaile your waye and losse the synne spoyled pleasures in euertlasting tormentes.

The patient sufferinge tribulation, vnto the commyng of the Lord. Beholde the patient manne weepeth for the pynfull fructe of the earth, and hath large patience there vpon until he receiue the early and latte rayne. He is also patient therfor, and setteth vnto heares, for the commyng of the Lord wherwith hee. Whaumeate doe agayn another tribulation, lest he be damned. Beholde the iudge standeth betwix the heare. Take (my brethren) the prophete for an example of sufferinge abjectlye, and of patience, which spake in the name of the Lord. Beholde, we counte them happye whiche endure, ye haue heare of the patience of Job, and haue heare what canse the Lord made. For the Lord is verye pitifull and mercifull. What shal all things be tribulation successe, neither by deathe, neither by reth, neither any other waye. Let your ye be pee, and your daye maye crye ye fall into poverty. If any of you be bereaue, let hym praye. If any of you be merry, let hym singe psalmes: if any be diseased among you let him call for the chiefe of the congregation, & let them praye over hym. If any of hym with stande in the name of the Lord, and he praye of faith that cure the sick, & the Lord shall raise hym up: and ye be done thaim the synne, they shal be seiged bym.

The xxxix.

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the Epistle

Therfore byrthen, call not beuote your hartes, be not feare for your chaunce, haue no feare at the syche folkes, whiche seme to haue chauges as they would haue, beuise no reuengement agaynst them, but patiently suffer them vnto the running of the ryde.

Aske is the tyme of sowinge, than Maie the tyme of reaping. The reuenges of your goodynes doe not yet appeare, but yet they are in fauour to be belieued in theyr tyme. Beholde he that is a tyllour of grounde, what labour taketh he, to his owne cosse, and all in hope that the grounde shal in his tyme geue the thinge that it receyued with abouantage. And yet the profite of the grounde is not in euery place certayne. It is be not fauourable neither, nor reasonable cause in tyme to moouen the grounde that is tilled, and at the latter tyme to kepe the corne when it waxeth bigge, from the heate, the husbando loseth his labour. And where he taketh longe labours here, vpon good hope of fruite in tyme, & requirerh not that it shoulde by any by appare be whiche he hath sowed: how muche moze is it reason, that you shoulde patiently suffer the dispicalites of this lyfe for the fruite of Immortalities sake, namely seinge your reward is in fauour, so that you in the meane while make a good scouice. And therfore after the example of the husbando, custome you and plucke by your stomakes strongly vpon good and sure hope, bringe neither vntous of reuengement, neither hearye of well doinge. The soide will come, both to take vengeance vpon the wicked, and to reward you with immortalitye for your temporall afflictions. Yetter is that daye longe to, it shall come sooner than it is toke for. Therfore my byrthen, let no man thynke hym selfe the moze vnfortunate, in that he is troubled with many sorowes, neither let any mane cummy that lyueth moze at hartes care. For neither is he, that suffereth the greater grieffe, forsaken of God, but is exercised vnto greater rewardes: neither is thys manne therfore the moze beloued of God, because he lyueth in moze quietnes: but he wyl haue some, whose goodynes shoulde ease other mennes miseries. Let not therfore that vngodly mourning (the token of halter and insoulerie) be amonge you that you be not condemned. For suche kynde of sorowfull mourninges are the soie tokens of a vnrnde that wyeth paine vnto desperacion: let the Myseries of the tyme comforte you. Beholde the iudge Dauideth at the doore, the rewardes are in a readynes for euery one accordyng to the desires of his lufe past. In the meane tyme garnyshe your myndes with the examples of holy fathers: if these thinges shoulde haue happened to none but you, there had ben matter perchauce for you to maruaille at. The prophetes suffered moze greuous matters, whiche opened the true saynges of God vnto the wicked. And like as the wicked riche men at that tyme could not abyde the prophetes saynges, such is theyr canse not abyde the Gospelles doctrine nowe, because it is contrary and repugnant agaynst theyr stubbes. Yet no manne bewaileth the prophetes chaunce, no manne thynketh them vnhappye, in that they suffered imprisonmentes and fetters, no: in that they were sayne with sondry kyndes of tormentes: but we iudge them happye, in that they were sayne for righteousnes sake. You haue hearde tell of the noble example of patience of Job. What a sorte of sorowes suffered he by the cruel assaults of Satan: you haue marked his wepyng, and you haue marked hym also getting the victorie through the soides helpe: by whose goodnes for euery thynge that was taken from hym by the malice of Satan, he receyued agayne thuse as muche.

The paraphrase of Crasimus vpon the Epistle

may fall such as hee was, and he prayed in his prayer that it might not rayne: and it rayned not on the earth by the space of foure paces and six monethes. And he prayed againe, and the heauē gaue raine, and for raine brought forth her sente. Wherefore, if any of you be eree from the truth and another cometh by us, let the same knowe that he whiche can mercifully the sinner from going all rayne out of his weape, shall saue a soule from death, and shall by euerie multitude of synners.

And forasmuche as the life of manne consisteth not without light and dayly offences, it shall be conueniente to vse a dayly remede, that you maye bothe relieue every one other with your mutuall prayers, and acknowledge every one bys faulte to other. And so shall the remedy be euaylable, if thou acknowledge thy disease and desire helpe. Superstitious folkes suppose a secret hidden efficacy to be in theyr enchauntmentes and prayers, but in very dede the prayer of a righteous manne is muche worthe, whiche through faith obteyneth what so euer it desireth of God. vpon this vnderpon Christe made couenaunt with vs, that what so euer we shall aske in a faithfull trusty confidence, we should obteyne it, vnles it be suche a thynge, as were beste not to be obteyned. Would you saye haue a doctrine of thys matter? Elyas was a pure manne, he was a most fall manne as we are, and yet at his prayers it rayned not vpon the earth thye yeares and six monethes. He prayed againe, that it might rayne, and anon the heauens, as hauynge heard his prayers, gaue raine, and the earth brought forth his frute. Incha the heauen be obedient to the prayers of one godly manne, as though it were bewytcheth it any maruayle, if God beynge moste ready to forgiue, be pleased at the prayers of many. How weighe this, brethren, if it be godly, if it be the pates of christyan loue, to ease the sickness of an other mannes bodye through commune prayers: howe muche more indifferent reason is it, that we should succour them that be diseased in mynde. For it is no greate matter to obteyne this by prayer, that it may be somewhat longer before death happen to this man or that man, howebeit it muste nedes come on: but it is a greate matter to haue a voided the disease of mynde. Therefore if there be any among you, that cree from the Gospelles verities, ether to muche cleauing to the lawe of Moyses, or be a stubborne follower of heathen trygton belliuered of the clothe, let no man thinke that he should be bypnen awaye with Golgospa, but as heareth rather to endeavour with all studies to this ende, that he maye turne and repent from bys error. For who so euer doeth thus, shall doo God a greate sacrifice, who wisheth not the death of a sinner but rather that he maye turne and lyue. For that man doeth a greate feate, that by security the soule from death, bypurchyngt bys brother from synnes, wherby he was holden in subreccion of death. And in the meane tyme shall he wante bys reioyce:

For Christe shall forgour hym bys synnes againe, howe many so euer they be, that shall kepe his brother from death.

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(1)

¶ Thus endeth the epistle of James the apostle.